A Psycho-Analytic Study of the Select Novels of

Sir William Golding

A

Synopsis

Submitted for the degree of Ph.D in English

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Synopsis

1. Title of the Thesis: A Psycho-Analytic Study of the Select Novels of Sir William Golding

2. Introduction: Psychoanalysis is a psychological and psycho-therapeutic theory conceived in the late 19th and early 20th centuries by Austrian neurologist Sigmund Freud. It means a system of psychological theory and therapy that aims to treat mental disorders by investigating the interaction of conscious and unconscious elements in the mind and bringing repressed fears and conflicts into the conscious mind.

   Sir William Golding is a post-war novelist who was born in 1911 and grew up in the year before World War II. Golding had decided to be a writer at about the age of twelve. With his love of reading and his early attempts at writing, Golding studied Literature at college. He joined the Royal Navy when World War II began in 1939. He was of the view that war changed man's essential nature. In 1980, Golding was awarded the coveted Booker Prize for his novel *Rites of Passage* and in 1983 he received the Nobel Prize for Literature. Golding is an artist, who has a deep understanding of Human nature.

   Golding's five novels*: Lord of the Flies (1954), Pincher Martin (1956), Darkness Visible (1979), Rites of Passage (1980)* and *The Double Tongue (1995)* have been selected for an in-depth analysis from the point of psychoanalytic criticism because they trace Golding's development as a writer as they belong to different phases of his career and they cover a variety of themes. The characters, situations, perspectives, and narrative techniques used by Golding to build up his fictional world will be studied. Works on

Lord of the Flies abound, but there is a lacuna in the Golding criticism where psychoanalytic studies of the works selected is concerned. Not much critical attention has been given to the works taken under the study.

3.A Brief Review of the Work done in the Field:

-- Studies on Symbolism, Moral Vision and Fictional World of the works of William Golding have been done. Not much attention has been given to psychoanalytic study.

-- A study of the basics of psychoanalytic criticism has been made. Primary and Secondary study materials have been collected. Primary materials are being read.

4. Objectives: The proposed work will seek to find out the deep relation between a work of art, psychology, and criticism. It will search for answer to the following tentative questions:

1) What is psychoanalytic criticism, and how far is it effective in the study of complex literature?

2) How do works of Golding reflect complex situations and issues?

3) How do human beings respond in difficult situations, and how are they reflected in art?

4) What are the moral conflicts that haunt mankind?

5) What is the effect of loneliness on human psyche and behavior?

6) What is the relation between God and man, as reflected in Golding?

7) What is the nature of evil, sin, and guilt as manifest in Golding's work?

8) Does the work of literature reflect the complete nature of the writer?

9) How far does psychoanalytic criticism make a genuine assessment of literature?

10) How does Golding's work reflect the conscious, and the unconscious?

11) What is the effect of Golding's work and how is this work relevant and important in understanding the predicament of man?

5.Noteworthy Contribution in the proposed field of work: Some of the works on William Golding are:

Moral Vision of William Golding by N.R.Iyer

William Golding: The Unmoved Target by Virginia Tiger

Exploring Fictional World of William Golding by Juthika Bhattacharjee

Other notable works on Golding are listed in the select Bibliography.

6.Proposed Methodology: The proposed methodology will be a close textual analysis of the selected primary sources using the critical viewpoints offered by secondary material. The methodology will include a judicious study and use of articles, reviews, interviews, books, online sources and material related to the study. The study is based on critical theory and so a study of the theory related to psychoanalysis and literary criticism will be made. Psychoanalytic criticism uses some of the techniques of psychoanalysis in the interpretation of literature.

The format and documentation will be as per the latest MLA Handbook (Seventh Edition) by Joseph Gibaldi.

7.Expected Outcome of the Proposed Work: The expected outcome of the proposed work will be a thesis with the following tentative chapters:

Chapter I – Psychoanalytic Criticism

Psycho-Analytic Criticism is an approach to literature that draws upon psycho-analytic theories, especially those of Sigmund Freud , Jacques Lacan, and others to understand the text, the writer, and the reader. The basis of this approach is the idea of the existence of a human unconscious- those impulses, desires, and feelings about which a person is unaware, but which influence emotions and behavior. It is the theory of personality developed by Freud that focuses on repression and unconscious forces and includes the concepts of infantile sexuality, resistance, transference, the symbolic, and division of the psyche into the id, ego, and superego. Critics use psychological approaches to explore the motives of characters and the symbolic meanings of events, and biographers speculate about a writer's own motivations- conscious or unconscious- in a literary work. Psychoanalytic approaches are also used to describe and analyze the reader's personal responses to a text. This chapter will trace the growth of Psychoanalytical criticism and analyze and interpret its main tenets.

Chapter II – Sir William Golding: Life, Works and Achievements

Sir William Golding is a post-war novelist who was born in 1911 and grew up in the years before World War II. Golding decided to be a writer at about the age of twelve. With his love of reading and early attempts at writing, Golding decided to study Literature at college. He joined the Royal Navy when World War II began in 1939 and after the war he returned to teaching in a boys' school. He was of the view that war changed thinking about man's essential nature. In 1980, Golding was awarded the coveted Booker Prize for his novel *Rites of Passage* and in 1983 he received the Nobel Prize for Literature.

Golding is one of those writers who feel an urgent calling to delve deep beneath the surface of the patina of culture and manners and wants to reach an understanding which is at the core of original sin that moves man. In trying to analyze these issues, Golding became a prominent moralist-novelist. He views the average man as sick, a fallen being "with a sinful nature" and feels that "his spiritual state is perilous". He declared himself a moralist and considered the novel a fit vehicle for expressing the terrible reality of Man's moral condition. This chapter will make a deep study of Sir William Golding's life and the physical, psychological, social, moral and literary influences that shaped his sensitivity and his creative genius.

Chapter III- *Lord of the Flies:* Loss of Innocence

William Golding established his individual genre in *Lord of the Flies* (1954), in which a group of boys, stranded on a desert island after an air crash, regress to savagery. In reversing the pattern of children's adventure stories and locating evil in the boys

themselves, Golding re-energized the notion of original sin. The whole novel is symbolic, even the characters are symbols. Ralph, the central character is the symbol of order and democratic government and the opposite of him is Jack who is a symbol of cruelty and savagery. With the help of various symbols, Golding presents the allegory of man's fallen state. *Lord of the Flies* is a parable showing the harmful effect of the removal of civilized restraints, which results in a complete regression to a brutal and savage state.

This chapter aims to highlight and try to understand the psychology behind the dark and evil side of men.

Chapter IV- *Pincher Martin:* Conscious Survivor

The novel *Pincher Martin* (1956) is set during World War II. In this novel a shipwrecked sailor named Pincher Martin imagines that he is clinging to a bare rock desperate to survive. His past is recalled; but at the end it is learnt that he died in the wreck and that the whole recollection had taken place at the point of drowning. This changes the work into a religious allegory of purgatory and damnation. It develops the theme of cruelty as the basic nature of mankind, underneath a thin veneer of civilization.

This chapter will highlight the fact that the consciousness of man is so self-centered, and he is so terrified of the infinite that it creates for itself a fantasy existence even in death and wants to enjoy the luxury of personal identity. The concept lends itself to deep psychoanalytical interpretation.

Chapter V- *Darkness Visible:* Sin and Salvation

The influence of World War II on Golding's mind is reflected in his novel, *Darkness Visible* (1979). The dominance of evil in this world is the message that Golding wishes to convey through this novel. As the title indicates, the novel deals with the theme of the innate darkness of the human heart. The darkness and evil of this sickly world is presented in a personified form through the vicious character, Pedigree, a teacher who regards man's inclination towards evil as natural, and seduces boys in public toilets. The novel presents a sharp moral conflict by bringing face to face the character of the villainous Sophie Stanhope, who succumbs to her baser instincts, and the saintly Matty Windrive, who makes sacrifices for the salvation of others.

Golding seems to be aiming at the triumph of religious and moral values on the visible darkness of the world. The novel abounds in symbolism of episodes, and in allusions to biblical characters like Christ, St. Matthew, and others. This chapter aims to deal with social and psychological problems of mankind.

Chapter VI – *Rites of Passage:* Initiation Issues

Winner of Booker Prize, Golding's novel *Rites of Passage* (1980) is a complicated allegory which lends itself to several interpretations, and analysis on many levels. In this novel, the action takes place on a ship sailing to Australia. Confinement on a ship provides the novel with a unique backdrop, a separate world, a universe in miniature. The narrative is further confined to the point of view of a man called Edmund Talbot, who maintains a journal wherein he records all his experiences. This novel is a

journey into the psyche of characters, into a pessimistic assessment of man's nature. It depicts the spirit of good and evil surrounding and confusing mankind.

This chapter proposes to highlight the frailty of man's morality, of man's understanding, and of man's control of the self and his environment.

Chapter VII – *The Double Tongue:* Of the Remote Past

The Double Tongue (1995) is Golding's last novel and was published posthumously. In this novel, Golding goes into the ancient past for his material, choosing as his protagonist the reluctant Oracle named Arieka at Delphi in a time when Greek culture and political power were waning, and Roman influence under Julius Caesar was fast becoming a juggernaut. Arieka was handed over to the service of the shrine by her parents. She had spent sixty years as the medium, the torn mouthpiece of equivocal sayings, from the bronze tripod in the sanctuary beneath the temple. Over a lifetime at the mercy of gods and priests and people, she has watched the decay of Delphi's fortunes and its influence in the world.

This extraordinary short novel is a psychological and historical triumph of the author. Golding has lost none of his ability to "see through to the heart of things" and represents these experiences in intense language.

Chapter VIII- Conclusion

William Golding is a writer who deals with the psychology of his characters and the present study aims to highlight the psychoanalytic study of the novels of William

Golding. This chapter will contain the overall findings and solutions to all the psychological problems that have been portrayed in his works discussed.

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9.List of Published Papers : 1 Paper Published on the Topic-

"Communication as a Vehicle and Bond of Man's Life" on page no. 654-656 in

An International Research Journal *LAB TO LAND*

Quarterly Multi Disciplinary Multilingual Referred Research Journal

Vol. 04 No. 15. July-Sep, 2012

ISSN No. 0975-282X

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